increase of about 17.7% over the level of Rs. 26,351 crores for the year 1995-96.

[English]

Sharing of Tax

1611. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have decided recently to increase the share of States in all tax-revenue from the current financial year; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) : The Tenth Finance Commission (TFC) had recommen-ded an alternative scheme of sharing of Centre's tax revenue between the Centre and the States. The Ministry of Finance had brought out a discussion paper on the alternative scheme and tabled this paper in Parliament on December 20, 1996. The alternative scheme of TFC has been discussed in the meetings of the Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council and during the third meeting of the Inter-State Council held on July 17, 1997, it has been decided to adopt the consensus to accept the alternative scheme of 29% devolution w.e.f. 1.4.1996 proposed by the Tenth Finance Commission with one modification. The percentage share of vertical devolution may also be reviewed by successive Finance Commissions instead of freezing it for fifteen years, as suggested by the T F C. Further, this percentage may be reviewed sometime in December, 1997 or January, 1998 with a view to consider improvement in the States' share.

Violation of Article 14 in Case of Undertrails

1612. SHRI AJOY MUKHOPADHYAY : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that most of prisoners in the country comprise 90 per cent undertrials who are presumed guilty and deprived of the benefits admissible under the law of the country;

(b) if so, the reasons for violation of Article 14 of the Constitution; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) to (c) The requisite information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Seizure of Silver

1613. SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA :

SHRIMATI PURNIMA VERMA :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity and the value of illegally brought silver seized during the current year and the details of places where it was seized;

(b) the number of persons arrested in each case;

(c) whether involvement of some gangs of smugg-lers have been detected in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof AND the modus operandi of smuggling by them; and

(e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to check such type of smuggling?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE : (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Expert Group of Income Tax

1614. SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Expert Group of Income Tax has suggested to adopt Singapore model in regard to the incidence of tax evasion;

(b) if so, the suggestions made by the expert group; and

(c) the extent to which these have been consid-ered and are being implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir, the Expert Group set up to rewrite Income-tax Act has suggested that Section 33 of the Singapore Income tax Act with a few changes should be adopted in the Indian Income-tax Act as a special anti-avoidance provision which will cover cases other than the cases of outright tax evasion. The Group's recommendations are contained in Chapter-VIII of its report.

(c) Presently, the Expert Gruop is preparing a draft Bill based on its recommendations. After the Bill is ready, it is proposed to throw it open for public debate and thereafter a new Income-tax Bill, with suitable modifications, it likely to be introduced In the Parliament in the Winter Session later this year.

Rubber Cultivation

1615. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the estimated rubber cultivation in the country;

(b) whether there is any plan to increase the prod-uction in the non-traditional areas;